2: Caroe S-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1

between the orthodox of Bukhara and the Shiahs whom they regarded as Isfahani heretics, thus for the first time since the Arab conquest severing Transoxiana in the realm of thought from the south.

It is seldom realized how great has been the difference in outlook and ideology between Sunni and Shiah. Vambéry in 1863, on his way from Turkey through Persia in the garb of an Istanbul dervish, found himself spat upon as a supposed Sunni by Shiah wayfarers, while ten years later Schuyler in Turkistan was surprised to find that the orthodox pilgrim from Bukhara travelled to Mecca always by Istanbul or India rather than expose himself to Shiah taunts on the direct road through Persia. Thus even in Muslim times a curtain had begun to drop along the Oxus.

The Shaibanids ruled for a century from Bukhara, their greatest Khan being Abdullah, who before his death in 1598 succeeded in uniting Khorezm with Transoxiana. Like Akbar and Elizabeth of England, his contemporaries, Abdullah ruled for nearly half a century. He conquered Meshed, Herat and Badakhshan, and at the height of his power even had designs on Akbar's India. After his death began a period of anarchy, confused by fighting with the Persian Safavids for the possession of Khorezm, which in the end became independent under another line of Uzbek Shaibanids, of whom the best known was the historian Abulghazi (d. 1663). He and his successors reversed the tables, making Khorezm for a time the overlord of Bukhara. But, as we have seen, its prosperity had been undermined before this time — according to some in 1573 — by a change in the course of the river, a disaster which led to the abandonment of the old capital at Urgench and the rise of a new city at Khiva. By this name the Khanate was thereafter known.

At Bukhara, after Abdullah's death, the power of the Shaibanids rapidly waned. It gave way first to the Janids, and then to the Mangits, both Uzbek houses tracing descent from Shaibani on the distaff side. Two centuries of nonentities are lit by a single high-light, the invasion in 1740 of the great

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RL1 Turkestan RL1

The population of the former[1] was traditionally nomadic, Turkish, and in religious matters fairly indifferent. Turkestan, on the other hand, being predominantly urban and agricultural, and inhabited by Iranians and considerably Arabicized and Iranicized Turks, was until the Soviet period one of the great centers of Islamic learning and practice. This difference between the religious background of the two regions must be kept in mind when studying contemporary Central Asian Muslims.

The most striking feature of the religious attitude of the Muslim refugees is their strong and articulate hostility toward all forms of established religion, including Islam. Time and again, the informants expressed the conviction that all religion is a form of superstition incapable of standing the test of "science," of serving society as a means of attaining social progress. The typical opinion ran as follows: "Yes, I believe in a Supreme Being, but it doesn't matter whether He is called Allah, God, Christ, or anything else. Nor does He care whether I pray or not. Religion is a superstition which keeps people backward. Look at the Arabs and Persians, where religion has gotten them: they are poor and ignorant. To achieve progress, we must not allow religion to interfere, though religion should not be persecuted because it does help some people in facing life." The general assumptions behind such reasoning are fairly obvious: the belief in a conflict between faith and reason, religion and science; a pragmatic, utilitarian scale of values; scepticism of certain aspects of religion, leading to a wholesale rejection of all religion.

In the long run, this attitude may well determine the whole future of Islam in Central Asia. The intelligentsia displays the same cult of reason, and of its concomitant, secular society, in an extreme, uncomprising way, as do the educated groups of other Asian societies. Here, as there, progress, the ultimate good, is conceived as incompatible with religion. Against such hostility to established religion the revival of Islam in its pre-1917 form, even under conditions of complete freedom, does not seem likely.

This conclusion is strengthened by the picture given of the religious practices of Central Asian Muslims. Islam in the Soviet Union has to operate under extremely difficult conditions, due in part to the specific repressive measures undertaken by the regime against religion, and in part to the general conditions of Soviet life. In the first category are the physical destruction of the Islamic leadership undertaken between 1927 and 1932 through the arrest and deportation of virtually all persons enjoying some religious status in the Muslim community, from the top hierarchy to the lowest village mullah; the closing of nearly all the village mosques and most of the city mosques; the threat of dismissal hanging constantly over every Soviet citizen in any position of responsibility if known to engage in religious practices; and the nearly complete suppression of all religious literature through the change of the native alphabets (from Arabic to

[1] [the northern half of Soviet Central Asia or Kazakhstan -- Analyst]

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RLl Turkestan RLl

Latin in the late 1920's, and again from Latin to Cyrillic ten years later), the impounding of religious texts, including the Qur'an, and the total cessation of all publication of a religious nature. These antireligious policies would of themselves make an active religious life most difficult.

The interviews, however, indicate that equally important in hampering the religious life of Central Asian Islam are forces not directly connected with the Communist antireligious policies, such as the general impoverishment of the population, which compels the inhabitants to devote all their time and energies to attain bare survival, and leaves little freedom for time-consuming actions required by religion; the shortage of animals used in certain Muslim festivals; and the requirements of a highly dynamic society, geared primarily for production and not for the satisfaction of the needs of its citizens. If, despite such formidable difficulties, Islamic practices have not altogether vanished from Central Asia, the reason must be sought both in the great hold which this religion exercises on its followers (Bartold had once observed that history knows many cases of mass conversion *to* Islam, but not a single instance of a society being converted *from* Islam), and the secondary role of leaders and institutions in that religion; the latter factor permits Muslims, like the Jews, to survive better under extreme oppression than other religions for which the clergy, the hierarchy, the supreme spiritual authority are essential.

One of the most important — perhaps the single most important — element in the Muslim ritual are the five daily prayers. This practice seems to have declined among Soviet Muslims to such an extent as to have all but vanished. The principal cause for its disappearance is the inability of Soviet Muslims to take time off from work in order to recite the prayers; such stoppage of work is considered "economic sabotage" and involves serious retribution. The fact that since the 1930's Friday — the day of rest and public prayer — is considered a regular working day in Central Asia prevents the adult population from engaging in communal worship as well. The only times of the day when a Muslim may perform his prayers undisturbed occur at sunrise and at sunset — the first and the last of the daily prayers; that is, when he is at home, with his family. This is the reason why, to the extent that the daily prayer is observed at all, it survives largely among that part of the population which is not gainfully employed: above all, the women and the elders.

The younger generation is further handicapped by its ignorance of the prayers. Only a few of the refugees interviewed knew how to perform the regular daily prayers; none of those belonged to the younger generation. It may also be added that not one of these refugees had cared to learn the prayers since his arrival in the West.

Another important duty of Muslims is to observe daytime fasting during the entire 28 days of the month of Ramazan. Prior to 1917 the fast was

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RLI Turkestan RLI

585 Occasionally, refugees indicate, after
177 a formal lay wedding ceremony, the parents of the bride and bridegroom may engage the services of a mullah or another trained person to read in secret the *nikah*, the wedding formula, but this is an exception rather than the rule.

798 As for the *shari'ah* — representing for the Muslims the religious "way
517 of life" — it has been eliminated not only by the Soviet liquidation of
177 native religious courts and the introduction of a single system of justice
578 throughout the Soviet Union, but also by the spontaneous development of Muslim society itself. Even prior to the 1917 Revolution there had emerged among the Central Asian intelligentsia a powerful secular reform movement known as *jadidism* (*dzhadidism*, in Russian transliteration), the followers of which adopted as one of their principal aims the separation of religion and state. The jadidists fought the clerical groups, gathered around the Ulema Dzhemieti (Association of Ulema), with as much fervor as they fought Russian colonial officials and settlers. Indeed, on this basis of a united effort against the religious influence on everyday life, there occurred in the early period of the Soviet regime an alliance between the Communists and left-wing jadidists which lasted until the purges of the 1930's. The desire to transform Central Asia into a modern, secular, Western country — a desire which is as deep-seated in the post-World War II refugee as it was in the pre-1917 jadidist — has as one of its prerequisites the elimination of religion from a position of influence in the everyday life of the Muslim community, and its confinement to the "proper" sphere, that is, ritual. Islam as a way of life has thus been destroyed by the combined pressures of Soviet antireligious policy and the hostility of the native intelligentsia. The trend in the direction of secularization is so distinct as to make a return to the *shari'ah* as unlikely as a return of Western Europe to the medieval theocratic ideal.[3]

771 Without doubt the religious life of the Islamic community in Central
565 Asia is stronger among the lower strata of society, among the mountain
517 peoples, and among the elders and women than it is among the groups represented in the interviews. But it is equally certain that the most active elements of society — the adult males, and especially the rural and urban "intelligentsia" — reject religion. A certain measure of religious revival in the event of the return of civic freedom in Central Asia is not unlikely. It may lead to a reopening of the mosques, the reinstitution of Friday prayers, the emergence of mullahs and the introduction of some religious education for the young. But a return to the religious life of the pre-
795 1927–32 period seems entirely out of the question. Islam still survives as
177 a powerful social bond because it serves to differentiate the native from

[3] In this connection it is interesting to note that recently a Constitutional Commission of Pakistan declared that a republic based on the principles of the Qur'an, as desired by the Pakistani ulema, could not be a democratic one, because of the fundamental incompatibility between Islam and democracy. See *New York Times*, April 24, 1954.